

\$46.6 million in new and retained sales
\$26.3 million in new investments
732 jobs created or retained

The National Institute of Standards and Technology's Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) works with small and mid-sized U.S. manufacturers to help them create and retain jobs, increase profits, and save time and money. The nationwide network provides a variety of services, from innovation strategies to process improvements to green manufacturing. MEP also works with partners at the state and federal levels on programs that put manufacturers in position to develop new customers, expand into new markets and create new products.

MEP field staff has over 1,400 technical experts – located in every state – serving as trusted business advisors, focused on solving manufacturers' challenges and identifying opportunities for growth. As a program of the U.S. Department of Commerce, MEP offers its clients a wealth of unique and effective resources centered on five critical areas: technology acceleration, supplier development, sustainability, workforce and continuous improvement.

Innovation is at the core of what MEP does. Manufacturers that accelerate innovation are far more successful than those who don't. By placing innovations developed through research at federal laboratories, educational institutions and corporations directly in the hands of U.S. manufacturers, MEP serves an essential role sustaining and growing America's manufacturing base. The program assists manufacturers to achieving new sales, leading to higher tax receipts and new sustainable jobs in the high paying advanced manufacturing sector.

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* Impacts are based on clients receiving service in FY2010



CLIENT SUCCESS: SPIRIT ELECTRONICS

“Arizona MEP has given Spirit Electronics some powerful tools to use for continuous improvement and growth.”

Vickie Wessel, President
Spirit Electronics

Spirit Electronics Improves Order Processing with Assistance from Arizona MEP

Spirit Electronics, founded in 1979, is a distributor specializing in supplying products and services to the defense/aerospace industry. Services offered include third-party logistics, procurement services, component tape/reel, dry bake, packaging, kitting, and other component prep operations. Product lines include active and passive components, connectors, and electromechanical devices. Spirit Electronics currently employs 11 people at its facility in Phoenix, Arizona.

Situation:

Spirit Electronics is an organization that is committed to continually improving its internal operations and is known for its commitment to its customers. On-time delivery and quality performance enables Spirit to maintain preferred/certified vendor status with its customer base. The company was looking for ways to improve quality, accuracy, and throughput via the optimization of current processes in order to support new growth opportunities and contacted the Arizona Manufacturing Extension Partnership (AZMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

AZMEP worked with Spirit Electronics on a three-phase project plan. John Little, Director of AZMEP, performed an assessment of the company's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Second, implementing a Value Stream Map (VSM) of the company's order management processes helped to identify primary work areas. Following the VSM project, the AZMEP team helped Spirit develop a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) to provide order to daily activities, bringing continuous improvement to their order processing. Finally, a three-day Kaizen event helped create standardized work stations with a visual, more efficient work environment.

Results:

- * Reduced 32-step manufacturing process to 14 steps.
- * Shortened overall lead time.

**\$35,000 in
cost savings**